

Changes in Transcription Service in the County Courts

Over the last several years throughout the country, courts have been discussing strategies for alternative methods of transcript production. In 2006, the county courts were notified that the manufacturer of the existing analog tape recorders used in the county courts would cease support (parts and service) as of 2012. As many of you know, courts were already having repair problems with parts harder to find and in some cases no longer available. The result has been the installation of digital recording equipment in the county courts. Currently, 79 county courts have this equipment in courtrooms. By spring of this year, we plan to have 87 courts using digital recording equipment.

This change has also provided us the opportunity to reevaluate the process by which we take and transcribe the record in all courts. Best practices and standards are being developed for all users of the digital technology to increase the quality of the court record. Steps are being taken to train all employees who use the digital equipment. A web-based training session will be required for all employees who have this duty. You should have received information regarding this session which will be offered the end of February.

We currently have a number of employees who are involved with transcription. Some transcribe a few pages a month and others produce several hundred pages a month. Some of this work has also gone to private transcribers. Payment for these bills of exceptions and transcripts is based on a page rate set by the Supreme Court but the total amount goes to the state general fund (unless the work has gone to a private transcriber) upon delivery of the written record to the requesting party. The court system does not receive this money.

Given our budget constraints, the time employees have been spending on this service can no longer be justified. As of March 1, 2010, the majority of transcription services in the county courts will be outsourced. This will allow those employees to be reassigned to other duties in their local courts or to provide remote assistance for other courts. Although transcription will no longer be a duty, we look to these employees to work in the courtroom and be leaders in using the digital equipment to obtain a quality record.

Linda Mitchell, in the Antelope County Court, has agreed to coordinate all requests for transcription. She will be taking the place of Eileen Janssen and managing all the transcripts in the county courts. If you have questions, please contact her. The following is her contact information:

Linda Mitchell
Assistant Clerk I
Antelope County Court
P.O. Box 26
Neligh, NE 68756
402-887-4650 Phone
402-887-4160 FAX
linda.mitchell@nebraska.gov

The following are new procedures for transcription work in the county courts. When you receive a Praecept for Transcription/Bill of Exceptions, instead of completing that work in your court or calling Eileen in our office to assist you, follow these steps:

1. Calculate the estimate and inform the requesting party of the amount due. (For digital recordings count one page for each minute; the charge is \$3.25 per page.)
2. Complete the new Request for Transcription form (on the website) and fax or e-mail Linda Mitchell this form within 24 hours of receiving the Praeceptum.
3. Linda will respond to you as to where to send the CD/tape and other required documents. Linda will also contact the transcriber so they can expect this work.
4. After you receive the amount for the estimate, send the documents by certified mail to the transcriber.
5. However, if after 14 days, you have not received the money due for the estimate, immediately inform the party that the work will not be completed, inform the transcriber and Linda.
6. After the work is completed it will be sent to you with the bill.
7. Have the appropriate judge certify the transcript.
8. Collect the balance due or refund the overage, whichever is applicable, and deliver the transcript to the requesting party.
9. Pay the transcriber's bill and reference the invoice number.

For those of you currently doing transcription, please complete the requests you are now working on.

All new requests for transcription received after February 12, 2010, should be sent to Linda Mitchell.